

# Guide to **Safe Fish**



## and **Wild Game Consumption**



in the  
**Saginaw Bay  
Watershed**





# Guide to Safe Fish and Wild Game Consumption in the Saginaw Bay Watershed

This guide contains information about harvesting fish and wild game that are safe to eat without concern for chemical pollution. It includes:

- A list of water bodies that have fish that are safe to eat on a regular basis for:
  - Families including children under the age of 15 and women of childbearing-age.
  - Adults including women beyond childbearing-age and men age 15 and older.
- A list of water bodies that have had adequate testing and do not have fish advisories except for the **Inland Lake Mercury Fish Consumption Advisory**.
- The **Wild Game Consumption Advisory** for the Tittabawassee River flood plain.
- The **Statewide Inland Lake Mercury Fish Consumption Advisory**.
- A list of all the waters within the Saginaw Bay Watershed that are in the **Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide**. (available at [www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic)).

This brochure lists fish from water bodies that can safely be eaten either **once per week** or in **unlimited amounts** as listed in the **Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide** for the 22 counties that make up the Saginaw Bay Watershed. Read the **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS** section, found on page 8, to expand your understanding of this guide.

### **Safe Fish for Families**

Use this list for fish that can safely be eaten by kids under the age of 15 and women of childbearing-age.

### **Safe Fish for Adults**

Use this list for fish that can safely be eaten by women beyond childbearing-age and men age 15 and older.

#### **The 22 Counties in the Saginaw Bay Watershed.**

Arenac	Iosco	Oakland	Bay
Isabella	Ogemaw	Clare	Livingston
Osceola	Genesee	Lapeer	Roscommon
Gladwin	Mecosta	Saginaw	Gratiot
Midland	Sanilac	Huron	Montcalm
Tuscola	Shiawassee		

## **REMEMBER!**

Follow the  
**Wild Game**  
**Consumption Advisory**,  
page 11.

Follow the  
**Inland Lakes Mercury Fish**  
**Consumption Advisory**,  
page 12.

# Safe Fish for Families

## Great Lakes - 1 meal per week

### **Huron**

Burbot  
Whitefish (under 18 inches)

### **Saginaw Bay**

Northern Pike (under 26 inches)  
Walleye (under 18 inches)  
White Sucker (under 14 inches)  
Yellow Perch

## RIVERS - 1 meal per week

### **Bad**

Northern Pike

### **Cass (Downstream from Bridgeport)**

Northern Pike (under 26 inches)

### **Flint (includes Mott Reservoir)**

Smallmouth Bass

### **Rifle**

Rock Bass

### **Sebewaing**

Carp (under 14 inches)  
Northern Pike

### **Shiawassee (Downstream from Owosso)**

Rock Bass  
Smallmouth Bass

### **Tawas**

Northern Pike

## INLAND LAKES - Unlimited Amounts

### **Kearsley (Genesee County)**

Largemouth Bass (under 18 inches)

### **Ponemah (Genesee County)**

Largemouth Bass (under 18 inches)

### **Sanford (Midland County)**

Black Crappie  
Rock Bass

### **Woodland (Livingston County)**

Carp (under 26 inches)  
Largemouth Bass (under 18 inches)

# Safe Fish for Families

(continued)

## INLAND LAKES – 1 meal per week

### **Kearsley (Genesee County)**

Carp (under 26 inches)

### **Sanford (Midland County)**

Channel Catfish (under 26 inches)

### **Wixom (Gladwin County)**

Northern Pike

### **Woodland (Livingston County)**

Carp (over 26 inches)

# Safe Fish for Adults

## GREAT LAKES - Unlimited Amounts

### **Huron**

Brown Trout (under 18 inches)

Burbot

Chinook Salmon

Coho Salmon

Rainbow Trout

Steelhead

Whitefish (under 18 inches)

### **Saginaw Bay**

Northern Pike

Walleye (under 22 inches)

White Perch

White Sucker

Yellow Perch

## GREAT LAKES - 1 meal per week

### **Huron**

Brown Trout (over 18 inches)

Lake Trout (under 22 inches)

### **Saginaw Bay of Huron**

Channel Catfish (under 18 inches)

Walleye (over 22 inches)

White Bass

# Safe Fish for Adults

(continued)

## RIVERS - Unlimited Amounts

### **Bad**

Northern Pike

### **Cass (downstream of Bridgeport)**

Northern Pike

### **Cass (upstream of Bridgeport)**

Northern Pike (under 26 in)

### **Cheboyganing Creek**

Northern Pike

### **Flint (includes Mott Reservoir)**

Smallmouth Bass

### **Kawkawlin**

Northern Pike

### **Rifle**

Rock Bass

### **Saginaw**

Walleye (under 22 inches)

### **Sebewaing**

Northern Pike

### **Shiawassee (Downstream of Owosso)**

Rock Bass

Smallmouth Bass

### **Tawas**

Northern Pike

### **Thread Creek**

Carp

Largemouth Bass

### **Tittabawassee**

Walleye (under 22 inches)

## RIVERS - 1 meal per week

### **Au Sable (at Oscoda)**

Walleye

### **Bad**

Channel Catfish

### **Cass (upstream of Bridgeport)**

Northern Pike (over 26 in)

### **Saginaw**

White Bass

# Safe Fish for Adults

(continued)

Walleye (over 22 inches)

## **Shiawassee (Byron to Owosso)**

Northern Pike

Smallmouth Bass

## **Tittabawassee**

Smallmouth Bass

Walleye (over 22 inches)

## **INLAND LAKES - Unlimited Amounts**

### **Fenton (Genesee County)**

Largemouth Bass (under 14 inches)

Northern Pike (under 26 inches)

### **Holloway Reservoir (Genesee County)**

Catfish

### **Kearsley (Genesee County)**

Carp

Largemouth Bass (under 18 inches)

### **Lobdell (Genesee County)**

Carp

### **Ponemah (Genesee County)**

Largemouth Bass (under 18 inches)

### **Sanford (Midland County)**

Black Crappie

Channel Catfish (under 26 inches)

Rock Bass

### **Thread Creek Impoundment (Genesee County)**

Carp

Largemouth Bass

### **Wixom (Gladwin County)**

Carp

Northern Pike

### **Woodland (Livingston County)**

Carp

Largemouth Bass (under 18 inches)

## **INLAND LAKES - 1 meal per week**

### **Fenton (Genesee County)**

Largemouth Bass (under 14 inches)

Northern Pike (under 26 inches)

### **Kearsley (Genesee County)**

Largemouth Bass (over 18 inches)



# Safe Fish for Adults

(continued)

**Littlefield (Isabella County)**

Largemouth Bass

**Lobdell (Genesee County)**

Largemouth Bass

**Ponemah (Genesee County)**

Largemouth Bass (over 18 inches)

**Sanford (Midland County)**

Channel Catfish (over 26 inches)

**Thompson (Livingston County)**

Black Crappie

**Woodland (Livingston County)**

Largemouth Bass (over 18 inches)

Fish fillets from the water bodies listed below were found to have little chemical pollution. However the **Inland Lakes Mercury Fish Consumption Advisory**, found

on page 12 of this brochure should be followed when eating from these lakes.



**LAKES**

Coldwater

Five Lakes

Heron

Lake Nepessing

Littlefield

Long

Pratt

Stevenson

**COUNTY**

Isabella

Clare

Oakland

Lapeer

Isabella

Iosco

Gladwin

Isabella

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Why are people most concerned about childhood exposure to contaminants in fish?**

The chemicals found in contaminated fish and wild game can affect the nervous, immune, and reproductive systems. A child's body is still developing these systems. Exposure to chemical pollution at the wrong time or in the wrong amount could forever change or damage a child's development. Once these chemicals enter a person's body, they can stay in the body for months to years.

## **Why aren't all the lakes and rivers in the Saginaw Bay Watershed found in this guide?**

To be listed in this guide, a water body must have adequate chemical testing of fish fillets. Water bodies not listed in this guide, have not had fish tested for chemicals.

## **What part of the fish is tested for chemicals?**

Only the fillet meat is tested for chemicals. The results are used to give consumption advice. If someone eats parts of the fish other than the fillet, the fish consumption advice may not be accurate.

## **Which chemicals are tested for?**

Michigan tests for chemicals that accumulate in fish at concentrations that may cause health problems. The most commonly found chemicals causing fish consumption advisories are mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Other chemical groups that have caused fish advisories in the Saginaw Bay Watershed are dioxins, furans, chlordane, polybrominated biphenyls (PBBs), and dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT).

## **How are fish selected for chemical testing?**

Typically, one type of bottom feeding fish (like carp) and one type of top predator fish (fish that eat other fish, like walleye) are selected from a

water body. Ten legally harvestable fish of each type are collected and the fillets are tested.

**Which waters are selected for chemical testing?**

Michigan has more than 11,000 lakes and 36,000 miles of rivers and streams. Not every state water or type of fish from that water can be tested every year. The state selects water bodies that have public access. Additionally, water bodies are selected for fish contaminant testing if they may have chemical pollution, have high recreational use, or may provide useful environmental information. The waters are selected based on a cooperative effort between the Departments of Natural Resources, Environmental Quality, and Community Health. Each year 40 to 50 waters are selected for fish contaminant consumption advisory monitoring.

**If one type of top predator fish from an inland lake or river is safe to eat (such as walleye), can I assume that other types of top predator fish from the same body of water are also safe to eat?**

Yes. For example, if all sizes of walleye from a river are safe to eat once per week, then it is safe to assume that other top predator fish (such as northern pike, bass, crappie, and perch) are also safe to eat once per week. If a size limitation is provided (for example, walleye under 18 inches), this assumption would not be recommended. **Note:** This assumption is not recommended for bottom feeding fish like carp, catfish or suckers nor is it recommended for fish from the Great Lakes or bodies of water attached to the Great Lakes.

**Do fish from the Saginaw Bay Watershed have PCBs?**

PCB contamination often results in fish consumption advisories for women of childbearing age and young children. There are advisories due to PCBs in the Saginaw River and Bay. Inland lakes in counties from southeastern Michigan also have some PCB contamination. Check the **Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide** for inland lakes in Oakland, Genesee, Lapeer and Livingston counties to see if PCBs are present.

## **What about Dioxin?**

Dioxins, another group of chemicals, cause fish and wild game consumption advisories for the Tittabawassee River and flood plain, and fish consumption advisories in the Saginaw River and Bay. You can get more information on dioxin at [www.michigan.gov/deqdioxin](http://www.michigan.gov/deqdioxin) or check:

### **Saginaw**

**Zauel Library**, 3100 N. Center Road

**Thomas Township Library**, 8207 Shields Drive

**James Township Hall**, 6060 Swan Creek Road,

**Hoyt Library**, 505 Janes Avenue

### **Freeland**

**Tittabawassee Township Hall**, 145 S. Second St.

### **Midland**

**Grace A. Dow Memorial Library**, 1710 W.

St. Andrews Street

## **Why is the state wide mercury fish consumption advisory only for inland lakes when all Michigan fish contain mercury?**

All fish in Michigan contain mercury. Based on many years of sampling, only top predator fish from inland lakes frequently exceed the amount that triggers the mercury fish consumption advisory. Therefore, a state-wide advisory was issued. Fish from rivers and the Great Lakes are tested for mercury and advisories are issued when necessary.

# WILD GAME CONSUMPTION ADVISORY



The State of Michigan issued a wild game advisory for the Tittabawassee River flood plain due to dioxin, downstream from the City of Midland.

## **Here are the recommendations:**

- Do not eat any liver from deer harvested in or near the flood plain of the Tittabawassee River.
- Limit consumption of deer muscle meat from this area. Women of childbearing age and children under the age of 15 should eat no more than one meal per week.
- Do not eat turkey harvested in or near the flood plain.
- Limit consumption of squirrel harvested in or near the flood plain. Women of childbearing age and children under the age of 15 should eat only one meal per week.
- Only deer, turkey, and squirrel harvested from the Tittabawassee River flood plain have been tested for dioxins. Other wild game may also be affected. Additional studies are being considered.
- Check the Wild Game Advisory [www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic).

# INLAND LAKES MERCURY FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY



Inland lakes are all lakes other than the Great Lakes. All inland lakes in Michigan contain mercury and have the following fish consumption advisory.

No one should eat more than one meal per week of these fish:

- Rock bass, perch, or crappie over 9 inches in length
- Any size largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, walleye, northern pike, or muskellunge

Women of childbearing age and children under the age of 15 should not eat more than one meal per month of these fish. Less restrictive advice is provided if fish from a given water body have been shown to be low in mercury.

# WATERS LISTED IN THE MICHIGAN FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY

These bodies of water are located in the Saginaw Bay Watershed and are found in the Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide available at ([www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic)). More complete fish consumption advice is provided for the waters listed below.

RIVERS	LAKE (County)
Au Sable	Caro Impoundment (Tuscola)
Bad	Holloway Reservoir (Genesee)
Cass River	Kearsley Reservoir (Genesee)
Cheboyganing Creek	Lake Huron
Chippewa	Saginaw Bay
Flint	Ponemah (Genesee)
Kawkawlin	Sanford (Midland)
Pine	Thompson (Livingston)
Rifle	Tobico Wetland (Bay)
Saginaw	Woodland (Livingston)
Sebewaing	
Shiawassee	
Shiawassee, South Branch	
Tawas	
Thread Creek	
Tittabawassee	

**Note! Bluegill and sunfish from any body of water in Michigan are a safe choice to eat.**

## **OTHER AVAILABLE MATERIALS:**

### **A Family Guide to Eating Fish:**

A brochure that provides a general overview of the fish consumption advisory, health benefits of eating fish and preparation methods to remove chemicals of concern other than mercury.

### **Avoid Mercury in Fish and Seafood, Shopping and Restaurant Guide:**

A brochure that provides a list of fish that are low in mercury that can commonly be purchased at grocery stores and restaurants.

### **Michigan Family Fish Consumption Guide:**

A booklet that contains the list of all fish advisories in the State of Michigan.

### **AVAILABLE AT:**

[www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic)



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the

*Michigan Department  
of Community Health*



**Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor**  
**Janet Olszewski, Director**

1-800-MI-TOXIC (648-6942) or  
[www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic).

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[www.saginawbaywin.org](http://www.saginawbaywin.org)**

#### NOTES:

[illegible]

**Please help us by giving us your comments.**

Was this brochure helpful in finding  
bodies of water that are safe to eat fish from for  
family members and children? (circle one)

**YES**      or      **NO**

Do you hunt and fish in the  
Saginaw Bay Watershed?  
(circle one)

**YES**      or      **NO**

Please provide a suggestion on how to  
improve this brochure.

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**HAVE AN OPINION ABOUT  
THIS BROCHURE?**

**PLEASE COMPLETE THESE  
QUESTIONS AND MAIL TO:**

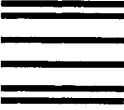
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MDCH-DEOE  
Capitol View Bldg, 4th Floor,  
Office 4-054  
201 Townsend St.  
Lansing, MI 48913**

Michigan Department  
of Community Health



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